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Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Letter dated 21 May 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the press release of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding the adoption by the European Parliament on 20 May 2010 of the resolution entitled "The need for an EU Strategy for the South Caucasus" (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 14 and 18, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Agshin **Mehdiyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 21 May 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Press release of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan welcomes the adoption by the European Parliament on 20 May 2010 of the resolution entitled "The need for an EU Strategy for the South Caucasus" on the basis of the report of the Bulgarian Member of Parliament Mr. Evgeni Kirilov. While strongly supporting the European Union initiative on the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership, the European Parliament calls for an increasingly active role of the European Union to transform the South Caucasus into a region of sustainable peace, stability and prosperity with a view to enhancing the integration of these countries into the European policies.

That important resolution singles out rightly the unsolved conflicts in the region as an impediment to the economic and social development and the full realization of the Eastern Partnership in the South Caucasus countries and considers the peaceful resolution of the conflicts as essential for the stability in the region. Referring to the respect by the European Union for the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity in its relations with the South Caucasus States, the European Parliament reminds furthermore that one of the aims of the Eastern Partnership is indeed to bring tangible support for the consolidation of statehood and territorial integrity of partner countries and judges unacceptable any conditioning of the respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries of the region.

The Ministry commends the clear and unequivocal position of the European Parliament with regard to the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and its heavy consequences. Thus, calling for the intensification of efforts to settle this conflict in the coming months and the abandon of preferences to perpetuate the status quo created by force and with no international legitimacy, the European Parliament demands the withdrawal of Armenian forces from all occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The European parliamentarians also express their serious concerns about the fact that hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons who fled their homes during or in connection with the Nagorno-Karabakh war remain displaced and their rights, including the right to return, are denied, and they call for an unambiguous and unconditional recognition of these rights and underline the need for their prompt realization.

Bearing in mind the "parliamentary elections" to be organized in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, the Ministry is pleased to note the confirmation, through the above-mentioned resolution of the European Parliament, of the European Union's position recognizing as unconstitutional and illegal the framework in which the elections in the breakaway territories take place, while defending the political rights of displaced persons.

Despite the desperate attempts of the Armenian side to thwart its adoption, that resolution was strongly supported by all main political groups of the European Parliament. The Ministry believes that that timely and clear statement by the European Parliament on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is a signal to Armenia to stop its policy aimed at prolongation of the settlement process and finally to take a constructive position in the negotiations, on the basis of the principles mentioned in the resolution.